

WORKING YOUR WAY BACK HOME

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security has launched a new program called ***Working Your Way Back Home***. The program helps Mississippi Hurricane Katrina evacuees who were displaced 151 miles or more from home get the assistance they need to find a job, or receive the training needed to get a job, and provides reimbursement for travel/relocation expenses.

Who is eligible for the program?

To qualify for Working Your Way Back home, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- Was displaced by Hurricane Katrina at a distance of 151 miles from their place of residence in Mississippi on August 28, 2005; and
- Is enrolled in the WIA program.

How can an individual participate in Working Your Way Back Home?

The program is administered through the state's network of WIN Job Centers. Interested individuals in Mississippi may visit their local WIN Job Center to request information on the program, or call 601-321-6526. Evacuees out of state are encouraged to call 601-321-6526, and they will be directed to the appropriate WIN Job Center. Reintegration Counselors at the WIN Job Centers will also be assigned to work with evacuees to help them find employment or training, and to assist them with other readjustment needs.

How will evacuees be reimbursed for their relocation expenses?

To receive reimbursement of travel/relocation expenses, an individual must work with WIN Job Center staff to enroll prior to their move and must ensure that:

- Relocation assistance was not available from other sources, and
- Adequate affordable housing is available and/or secured, and
- There is a valid job offer, or
- There is training available in a demand occupation in which the individual can succeed.

Reimbursement is made after the individual has moved and reports to the nearest WIN Job Center. The amount of reimbursement is based on the distance traveled. For example, if the distance traveled is 151 to 200, reimbursement is \$100. For 201 to 400 miles the reimbursement is \$200. The maximum reimbursement is \$700 for 801 miles or more.

The funds for reimbursement of the relocation expenses is made available through a National Emergency Grant MDES received from the U.S. Department of Labor. Other such supportive services may be available in the near future.

How does Working Your Way Back Home help businesses?

Bringing back Mississippi's evacuees ensures that the state's businesses have the skilled workers needed to succeed and to rebuild the devastated areas of our state. Many evacuees are ready to work their way back home, but need help with relocation expenses. Businesses hiring evacuees who will move 151 miles or more should have them call 601-321-6526 for assistance. Businesses are also encouraged to contact the local WIN Job Center for assistance in screening and hiring skilled workers.

How do I locate the nearest WIN Job Center? Call 601-321-6526, or visit www.mdes.ms.gov.